Documenting the Differences Between American and British Intelligence Reports

Lawrence J. Lamanna

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The war in Iraq, though tragic, opened for scholars and the public a unique window into the world of intelligence: the release of parallel British and American documents related to the prewar intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD). A comparison of these documents reveals significant differences between British and American approaches to intelligence concepts, structures, methods, purposes, and philosophies. Concrete and replicable evidence of differences between the two systems is based on directly comparable data.

But this study is not an evaluation of the performance or failure of the intelligence apparatus of either the United States or the United Kingdom. Neither is any judgment rendered as to whether policymakers and political leaders in either country made proper or improper use of intelligence products, whether regarding Iraq or other events.

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Among the observed differences are the following:

- When agencies disagree on intelligence findings, the American system allows for the expression of dissent from the majority view; the British system simply excludes the controverted finding.
- American intelligence reports include explicit levels of confidence; British reports do so only vaguely and occasionally.
- British intelligence reports provide greater historical context and take a more narrative form than do American reports.
- The British are more interested in hearing the assessments and analytical opinions of foreign governments and experts than are the Americans. The Americans look to foreigners mostly for collection purposes, not analytical or estimative ones.
- British intelligence agencies and government departments cooperate and collaborate with one another to a high degree; American agencies do not.
- In the American system, the various intelligence agencies come together to produce the most important intelligence reports. In the British system, the intelligence agencies and other departments of government come together to produce the most important reports that incorporate intelligence information.
- The American and British political systems (i.e., presidential vs. parliamentary) interact with their respective intelligence communities differently, and this may lead to different practices and norms.

BACKGROUND, DEFINITIONS, AND DOCUMENTS

Rarely is there a contemporary glimpse into the workings of the national intelligence apparatus of either the United States or the United Kingdom. Typically, intelligence reports and related documents are released to the public only decades after the events or situations they describe. Memoirs or first-person accounts, though perhaps more contemporary, are often difficult to verify and frequently interpretive. Because of the controversies surrounding Iraq, both the United States and the United Kingdom made a remarkable amount of intelligence information available to the public before the war. After the war began, and because of the subsequent loss of confidence in intelligence capabilities, both nations initiated high-level investigations into their own intelligence apparatus and products. These investigations placed even more information into public view.

Specifically, in the fall of 2002 the United Kingdom released *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government*¹ and the United States released *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs.*² Both documents were written for public consumption, but were also closely related to one or more classified reports.

By the summer of 2004, investigations into the quality of the underlying intelligence had been completed in both countries. On 7 July 2004, the
U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) released a redacted version of its results, Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq. On 14 July, the Butler Committee in the United Kingdom released Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction, otherwise known as the Butler Report. In addition to these reports, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) also released two heavily redacted versions of a classified intelligence report.

Three other documents should be mentioned, although they are not included in this analysis. First, on 9 September 2003, the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) of the UK Parliament delivered its investigative report, Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction—Intelligence and Assessments, to Prime Minister Tony Blair. This report is excluded here because it is not directly comparable to any U.S. report, due to its production date. The U.S. and British intelligence estimates were finalized within a few weeks of each other in the fall of 2002. Similarly, both the Senate report and the Butler Report were finalized in July 2004. The Butler Report, while acknowledging the usefulness of the ISC report, also notes that the Butler Committee had two important advantages over the ISC: the further passage of time and “much wider access to the Government’s intelligence and policy papers.” Because the timing of an investigation affects the results, it is important that the timing match in order to compare national reports.

Second, the British government released a document to journalists at the beginning of February 2003 that contained some information produced by the intelligence services. This document was excluded from analysis here because, in addition to information produced by British intelligence, it contained unattributed information from other, nongovernmental sources that made it quite controversial and unusual. On the American side, nothing compares to this document, and its treatment in the British investigative reports is minimal.

Finally, on 31 March 2005, the presidential Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (the Silberman-Robb Commission) released an unclassified version of its report. Unfortunately, because this investigation concluded almost nine months later than the other two analyzed here, it also suffers from the mismatched time problem. Further, its findings and characterizations are not independent of the others. The Silberman-Robb Commission Report acknowledged that the Butler Report was “an important resource” and the Senate report was “particularly valuable.” Thus the Silberman-Robb Commission Report is a valuable contribution to understanding what went wrong with U.S. intelligence, but because it was influenced by the Butler Report, it does not represent a purely national perspective.
The Nature of Reports

Both the United States and the United Kingdom have intelligence services that produce information, analysis, and reports for policymakers at the highest levels. In the United States, the epitome of these products is the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE). As former Associate Director of Central Intelligence Mark M. Lowenthal explains, “NIEs are long-term intelligence products that attempt to estimate (not predict) the likely direction an issue will take in the future. Ideally, NIEs should be anticipatory, focusing on issues that are likely to be important in the near future and for which there is sufficient time to arrive at a community-wide judgment.” An NIE may outline several possible directions that events may take, providing a judgment or estimate of the likelihood of each. NIEs, as highly classified documents, are normally not released to the public until decades after their production.

Each NIE is prepared under the supervision of a National Intelligence Officer (NIO), of which there are currently twelve. Some NIOs have a geographic responsibility, such as the NIO for Africa, and others have topical responsibilities, such as the NIO for Economics and Global Issues. Together with a chairman and staff, the NIOs make up the National Intelligence Council (NIC). NIEs are systematically and formally circulated and discussed among the fifteen agencies that make up the U.S. Intelligence Community and finally approved by the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI).

The British product that corresponds to an NIE is an Assessment. Assessments are produced by the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) Assessments Staff. The JIC, a Cabinet committee, is composed of the heads of the three British intelligence and security agencies; the Chief of Defence Intelligence; senior policy advisors from the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Home Office, the Treasury, and the Department of Trade and Industry; and representatives of other departments as necessary. These civil service policy advisors and department heads report to, and assist, government ministers in the formulation and execution of policy. The Committee meets weekly, and provides a key link between policymakers and intelligence services; it both reports intelligence to policymakers and communicates intelligence requirements to the agencies.

Figure 1 presents a chronology of the documents examined herein and notes the abbreviations used to cite them.

THE U.S. ESTIMATE AND WHITE PAPER

The CIA released three related documents that are a part of this study. The first is the public white paper, *Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs*, released on 4 October 2002. Work on this document began in May, but in
some ways the drafts were overtaken by events and the final document became a reflection of the classified NIE which was produced on 1 October (SEN 287).

The twenty-five page white paper contains color pictures, maps, and charts, and is clearly intended to show the danger that was Iraq. It describes nuclear, chemical, biological, ballistic missile, and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) programs. It also provides some history of United

### Figure 1. Chronology of Events and Key to Documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>Request made in the U.S. for white paper on Iraq’s WMD Programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 3</td>
<td>British government requests public dossier on Iraq’s WMD Programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>British assessment most closely associated with the British public dossier is produced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>DCI orders the production of a NIE on Iraqi WMD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October, 1</td>
<td>CIA produces NIE 2002-16HC on <em>Iraq’s Continuing Program for Weapons of Mass Destruction</em> (NIE).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>CIA releases <em>Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs</em>, an unclassified white paper related to the NIE (WP).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>February 1–2</td>
<td>British Coalition Information Centre shares <em>Iraq—Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception and Intimidation</em> with journalists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>U.S. and U.K. invasion of Iraq begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>SSCI announces intention to begin formal review of intelligence on Iraqi WMD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>CIA releases “Key Judgments” from NIE 2002-16HC (KJ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>Intelligence and Security Committee delivers <em>Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction—Intelligence and Assessments</em> to the Prime Minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>February 3</td>
<td>British government announces Butler Committee inquiry into 24 September 2002 assessment on Iraqi WMD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>President George W. Bush issues Executive Order 13328 creating the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (Silberman-Robb Commission, SR).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>SSCI announces expansion of its investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>CIA releases redacted version of NIE 2002-16HC (NIE).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 7</td>
<td>SSCI releases redacted version of <em>Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq</em> (SEN).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 14</td>
<td>Butler Committee releases <em>Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction</em> (BR).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Silberman-Robb Committee finishes classified and unclassified versions of its <em>Report to the President of the United States</em> (SR).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nations (UN) resolutions and UN inspection operations related to Iraq. Some statements and assertions are plainly speculative, with the authors indicating higher or lower levels of confidence for some of their assertions. But the document presents no dissenting opinions.

The document is structured as follows:

I. Key Judgments
II. Discussion— Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs
   a. Nuclear Weapons Program
   b. Chemical Warfare Program
   c. Biological Warfare Program
   d. Ballistic Missile Program
   e. Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Program and Other Aircraft
   f. Procurement in Support of WMD Programs

The next relevant U.S. document is the Key Judgments text. This document, released by the CIA on 18 July 2003, contains eight pages photocopied from the original, classified, October NIE. Specifically, these are pages 5 through 9 of the NIE, pages 24 and 25, and an amalgamation of pages 74 and 84. Large sections of several pages are masked. The first five pages are the NIE’s “key judgments” section. These pages are similar, but not identical, to the key judgments section of the white paper.

The INR Dissents

One of the most important contrasts to the white paper is that the Key Judgments text reveals some dissension from the prevailing judgments. At the end of the first paragraph of page one of Key Judgments, the reader is directed to a box at the end of the “key judgments” section (KJ 4) which explains the dissent of the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). In this text, the INR notes that while it does believe that Saddam Hussein wants to acquire nuclear weapons, it does not believe that the current intelligence makes a compelling case that he is “currently pursuing what INR would consider to be an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons” (KJ 4-5).

The INR statement cites the judgment of experts at the Department of Energy who found that a key piece of evidence against Iraq—the aluminum tubes acquired from abroad—were poorly suited for a nuclear program. For this reason, and because of the “atypical lack of attention to operational security” on the part of the Iraqis, the INR expresses its dissent from the majority view on the aluminum tubes (KJ 5). INR also states that it finds “highly dubious” the claim that Iraq was seeking to obtain uranium from Africa (KJ 8). Lastly, within the Key Judgments
section, the text states that the “Director, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, U.S. Air Force, does not agree that Iraq is developing UAVs primarily intended to be delivery platforms for chemical and biological warfare (CBW) agents” (KJ 3). The Air Force believed that the primary role of Iraq’s UAVs was for reconnaissance. Although not reproduced in Key Judgments, further elaboration of this dissent regarding UAVs is included in a footnote at a later point in the NIE. At least part of that footnote has been revealed in the Senate Report (SEN 225), despite its masking in the declassified NIE.

Another notable difference between Key Judgments and the white paper is that Key Judgments includes caveats such as “we judge” before some assertions. These phrases have the effect of indicating that a judgment is being expressed, not a statement of indisputable fact. The white paper does not include these caveats and therefore gives the impression that there is no serious doubt about its assertions.17

On 1 June 2004, the CIA released yet another version of what can now be identified as NIE 2002–16HC.18 This final version consists of the original cover, a two-page errata sheet that was referred to in the earlier releases, and the ninety-three pages of the document body. One page of the errata sheet and all but twelve pages of the body of the document are completely masked. Of the pages with text on them, the only new pages are the cover, a title page, and two pages at the rear which list the agencies involved in preparing the NIE and all of the NIC officers. In other words, the release is mostly blank pages. The rest of the visible material was available in the Key Judgments document. Page numbering is now visible, though, and that reveals the relative positions of the previously released pages.

The NIE states that it was “prepared under the auspices of Robert D. Walpole, National Intelligence Officer for Strategic and Nuclear Programs,” with assistance from the NIOs for Near East and South Asia; Science and Technology; and Conventional Military Issues (NIE title page). This NIE was requested by members of the SSCI who wanted more information available as they considered authorizing military action against Iraq (SEN 9). The NIE was authored mainly by former CIA Deputy Director John McLaughlin.19

THE BRITISH DOSSIER

The British Dossier, released by the Blair government on 24 September 2002, is fifty-one pages long and includes maps and photos. Commissioned on 3 September, it was based largely on three classified JIC assessments dated 15 March, 21 August, and 9 September, all of 2002. The 9 September assessment, which focused on various “attack scenarios,” was the most influential of the three (BR 79-80, 83).
From the beginning, the dossier was conceived of as a document for public consumption to help explain government concerns regarding Iraq. According to the foreword by Prime Minister Blair, the document as published was “based, in large part, on the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee” (DR 3). Subsequent reports indicate that the dossier was in fact authored by the JIC, with an Executive Summary written by the JIC’s chairman, John Scarlett.20

In many respects, the dossier’s content resembles the American documents—not surprising given the high level of intelligence and military cooperation between the two countries. Also, both the UK and U.S. had relied heavily on information from the UN inspection teams for a period of time, and were thus getting essentially the same information.

The structure of the dossier is as follows:

I. Forward by Prime Minister Tony Blair  
II. Executive Summary  
III. Iraq's Chemical, Biological, Nuclear, and Ballistic Missile Programs.  
   a. The Role of Intelligence.  
IV. History of UN Weapons Inspections.  
V. Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ESTIMATES

Numerous differences exist between the British and the American documents. The British dossier has more historical information, is written in a more narrative style than the American white paper or NIE, and provides more detail about individuals such as Iraqi scientists, government officials, and relatives of Saddam. In addition to describing Iraq’s weapons programs, it lays out a history of Saddam’s rule and his many human rights abuses. It also asserts a connection between the threat or use of force, and consequent Iraqi cooperation with inspections and the UN Security Council. The dossier gives more detail about what the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) teams found, and attributes information to them when appropriate. It more frequently reports the official position of the Iraqi government with respect to each issue, including more mention of the transgressions to which Iraq admitted.

The U.S. NIE is more explicit about stating levels of confidence for the various specific estimates than the British document. Again, these statements are not explicit in the public 2002 version, but they are in the unclassified portions of the NIE. While the British dossier does use words and phrases like “probably” and “may have” to express some uncertainty, there are very few negative statements, such as “we do not know....” One
of them refers to the aluminum tube question. The dossier states that “there is no definitive intelligence that [the specialized aluminum] is destined for a nuclear programme,” (DR 26). Another striking characteristic of the British dossier is the number of statements that, in one way or another, argue along the lines of “what else could it mean but...?” This could simply be the result of excluding uncertain things from the report.

The British assessment system is commonly understood to produce reports without dissent, a belief supported by these documents. American documents often feature explicit dissents from the main conclusions, most notably when reporting on Iraq’s nuclear program and capabilities. Nothing like these alternative views can be found in the British dossier. Of course, the actual, classified British assessments are not available for public inspection, but they were available to the Butler Committee, and the Butler Report makes no mention of dissenting opinions.

A difference in preparation time is also notable. The NIO for the Near East and South Asia began work on the U.S. white paper in May 2002, although some adjustment in purpose and focus may have occurred after a meeting between President Bush and Prime Minister Blair at Camp David in early September 2002 (SEN 55, 287; BR 72). This meeting seems to be the point of origin for the British dossier.

The American white paper was worked on for about five months, while the British dossier was produced in fifteen days. But, the British dossier was based largely on an assessment that had just been completed, whereas the American NIE was hurried through in twenty days and the white paper altered to match it.

One last observation about the differences between the British and American estimates is worth noting. The British dossier includes at least one case of classic British understatement. Regarding Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait it states, “When [Saddam’s] threats and blandishments failed, Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. He believed that occupying Kuwait could prove profitable” (DR 47).

THE REPORT OF THE U.S. SENATE

On 20 June 2003, Senator Pat Roberts (R., Kan) and Senator John D. Rockefeller IV (D., W. Va.), the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, announced that the committee would investigate the following items:

- the quantity and quality of U.S. intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction programs, ties to terrorist groups, Saddam Hussein’s threat to stability and security in the region, and his repression of his own people;
- the objectivity, reasonableness, independence, and accuracy of the judgments reached by the Intelligence Community;
whether those judgments were properly disseminated to policymakers in the executive branch and Congress;
whether any influence was brought to bear on anyone to shape their analysis to support policy objectives; and
other issues we mutually identify in the course of the Committee’s review (SEN 1).

On 12 February 2004, the committee agreed to add to those terms of reference the following items. Those that are listed as phase one are addressed in the 7 July 2004 report. Those listed as phase two were to be addressed in a future report.

the collection of intelligence on Iraq from the end of the Gulf War to the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom (phase I);
whether public statements, reports, and testimony regarding Iraq by U.S. government officials made between the Gulf War period and the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom were substantiated by intelligence information (phase II);
the postwar findings about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and weapons programs and links to terrorism and how they compare with prewar assessments (phase II);
prewar intelligence assessments about postwar Iraq (phase II);
any intelligence activities relating to Iraq conducted by the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group (PCTEG) and the Office of Special Plans within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Policy (phase I and II); and
the use by the Intelligence Community of information provided by the Iraqi National Congress (INC) (phase I and II) (SEN 2).

Committee staff members had already begun reviewing the intelligence on Iraq several months before the panel announced a formal investigation. The staff began its assessment with 15,000 pages of material from the Intelligence Community, and subsequently requested and received over 30,000 pages more. The committee was denied access to the relevant President’s Daily Briefs (PDBs). The PDB is a daily report provided to the President of the United States by the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). Without access to the PDB, the committee could not evaluate the dissemination of intelligence judgments to policymakers (SEN 2–3).

The staff interviewed more than 200 individuals, almost all of whom were officials or employees of the federal government or military services. The staff also interviewed “nuclear experts with the International Atomic Energy Agency” and former UN inspectors, but it is not clear whether or not these individuals were U.S. citizens. With those possible exceptions, the inquiry was apparently conducted entirely within the U.S. government and did not involve information from other governments or non-Americans, except as might exist in the original intelligence products.
The bulk of the work was done by the staff, with the SSCI itself holding only occasional hearings and giving direction. Part of the review method was to attempt to ignore and disregard current information on postwar Iraq until an analysis of the prewar information had been complete. The goal was to “replicate the analytical environment [Intelligence Community] analysts experienced prior to the war” (SEN 4). That such an attempt could be successful is hard to imagine.

The SSCI report is 511 pages long, all of it text. Although quite a few pages have significant portions blacked out, most of them are largely in the clear.

The structure of the report is as follows:

I. Introduction
II. Niger
III. Intelligence Community Analysis of Iraq’s Nuclear Program
IV. Intelligence Community Analysis of Iraq’s Biological Weapons Program
V. Intelligence Community Analysis of Iraq’s Chemical Weapons Program
VI. Intelligence Community Analysis of Iraq’s Delivery Systems
VII. Iraq WMD Intelligence in Sec. Powell’s UN Speech
VIII. IC Collection Activities Against Iraq’s WMD
IX. Pressure on IC Analysts Regarding Iraq’s WMD Capabilities
X. White Paper on Iraq’s WMD
XI. Rapid Production of the October 2002 NIE
XII. Iraq’s Links to Terrorism
XIII. IC Collection Activities Against Iraq’s Links to Terrorism
XIV. Pressure on IC Analysts Regarding Iraq’s Links to Terrorism
XV. Powell Speech—Terrorism Portion
XVI. Iraq’s Threat to Regional Stability and Security
XVII. Saddam’s Human Rights Record
XVIII. The IC’s Sharing of Intel on Iraqi Suspect WMD Sites with UN Inspectors
XIX. Appendices, Additional views of particular committee members.

A Contextual Process

The report begins with a description of the training process for CIA intelligence analysts, in order to put the rest of the discussion into context. Particular mention is made of the need to question assumptions and to work as a group in which individuals will challenge one another’s conclusions.

Of course, the great bulk of the report is about the content and details of the intelligence pertaining to Iraq and is not especially revealing of American and British intelligence differences. Nevertheless, some points are interesting for comparison, and others are simply interesting.

The Senate report reveals that an agency dissenting from some aspect of an NIE can apparently choose how to present its own dissent. In the October
2002 NIE, the State Department’s INR was initially going to explain its position in footnotes, but later “it decided to convey its alternative views in text boxes, rather than object to every point throughout the NIE. INR prepared two separate text boxes, one for the key judgments section and a two-page box for the body of the nuclear section” (SEN 53). Unfortunately, after further changes to the overall structure of the document, part of INR’s dissent on Iraqi efforts to acquire uranium was inadvertently placed in the section dealing with attempts to acquire aluminum tubes, instead of the section dealing with uranium acquisition (SEN 53–54).

The report also reveals that the Department of Energy (DOE) included at least one extensive text box outlining its dissenting view on the aluminum tubes issue (SEN 95). But this text remains classified.

The Senate report notes that managers do not necessarily review the raw intelligence on which an assessment is based, especially if the analyst is more senior and experienced. Editing will be performed, but not necessarily substantial review, and therefore “it is entirely possible that one analyst’s views may be presented to high-level officials including the President of the United States without having been reviewed by other analysts with the same depth of knowledge” (SEN 8). This should not be possible because an NIE is by definition a collaborative report.

The Path to an NIE

Nevertheless, in the case of the October 2002 NIE on Iraq, the time frame was short and some steps were skipped. The NIE was first requested on 9 September 2002 by Senator Richard Durbin (D., Ill.), an SSCI member. This request was followed the next day by another from Senator Bob Graham (D., Fla.), the SSCI chairman at that time. By the morning of 12 September, the DCI had directed the NIO for Strategy and Nuclear Programs to take the lead in producing an NIE on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction capabilities. Three other NIOs were also directed to work on the NIE. It was understood that the production cycle would need to be fast in order to meet the congressional need for information prior to voting on legislation. On 23 September, the lead NIO circulated a draft to the member agencies of the Intelligence Community, and two days later held an all-day meeting with community analysts to coordinate changes. A second draft was circulated on 26 September. Contrary to standard procedure, the NIO “did not submit the draft for peer review or to a panel of outside experts” (SEN 13). On 1 October, the NIE was approved by a meeting of the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB) and printed the same day. The NFIB, chiefly composed of the heads of the various intelligence agencies, is chaired by the DCI. The NFIB normally approves NIEs, but how often the board meets in person, or whether it met in
person to approve this NIE is not clear. In all, the process took twenty days. In interviews conducted for the Senate report, NIOs told the staff that they would prefer to have three months to produce an NIE (SEN 11).

Regarding interagency work and collaboration, the report states this: “Depending on the product, the analysis may be coordinated with other [Intelligence Community] members, but in many instances, each agency produces its own finished products which are subject to review and editing by its own internal management” (SEN 7). The report also identified agency rivalry and compartmentalization within a single agency (especially the CIA) as problems (SEN 26-29, 268-271). Presumably, some of this was motivated by source protection and some of it by ordinary bureaucratic turf protection. The report finds that this lack of openness between agencies or even within an agency can interfere with what the British call “validation.” Validation includes the process of vetting a source, which is a key to giving appropriate weight to the information coming from the source. If an analyst is denied information about a source, weighting that source appropriately becomes more difficult.

Who’s in Charge?
The dual role of the DCI—head of the CIA and head of the whole Intelligence Community—is identified as a source of failure. The SSCI report asserts that in fact the DCI functions mostly as head of the CIA, and that collaboration and sharing of information among agencies suffers as a result. As an illustration of this, the DCI told the committee staff that he does not even expect to learn of dissenting opinions until an issue comes up in the production of an NIE. Prior to that point, “debate about significant national security issues may go on at the analytical level for months, or years, without the DCI or senior policymakers being informed of any opinions other than those of CIA analysts” (SEN 29, 139). Yet, the CIA and the DCI are regularly put in the position of presenting information to the President and other policymakers that is supposed to represent the thinking of the whole Intelligence Community. This means that they must often present dissenting opinions (when they are aware of them) that they do not share, thereby calling into question the effectiveness of the presentation.

The creation of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) in December 2004 has, of course, changed this dynamic. The DCI still heads the CIA, but the DNI now has responsibility for overall management of the U.S. Intelligence Community and for the presentation of intelligence estimates to the President. This should go a long way toward eliminating the overrepresentation of CIA views in intelligence reports viewed by the President.

The Senate report also states that U.S. intelligence “relies too heavily on foreign government services and third party reporting, thereby increasing the potential for manipulation of U.S. policy by foreign interests” (SEN 34). In
referring to intelligence collection, the report does not address whether the U.S. could actually benefit from foreign analysis and assessment help.

Finally, the committee found no evidence that the Bush administration officials had attempted to coerce or otherwise influence the analysts to change their judgments (SEN 272-284).

THE BUTLER REPORT

The Butler Committee, created on 3 February 2004, consisted of five members led by Lord Butler. The terms of reference for the committee were:

- To investigate the intelligence coverage available in respect of WMD programmes in countries of concern and on the global trade in WMD, taking into account what is now known about these programmes; as part of this work;
- to investigate the accuracy of intelligence on Iraqi WMD up to March 2003, and to examine any discrepancies between the intelligence gathered, evaluated, and used by the government before the conflict, and between that intelligence and what has been discovered by the Iraq survey group since the end of the conflict;
- to make recommendations to the Prime Minister for the future on the gathering, evaluation, and use of intelligence on WMD, in the light of the difficulties of operating in countries of concern. (BR 1)

Also, Prime Minister Blair asked that the committee produce its report before the summer recess. The panel was charged to follow a method of inquiry modeled on the Franks Committee that investigated the Falklands War.23 The committee was to submit its final conclusions “in a form for publication, along with any classified recommendations and material” (BR 1). The main product was meant to be public, with additional classified materials available to the government.

The five committee members held a total of thirty-six meetings. They interviewed officials within the British government and intelligence services, including the Prime Minister. The committee also traveled to the United States to meet with senior officials, members of Congress, and the staffs of the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency. They traveled to Baghdad to meet with some military leaders and Charles Duelfer, the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction. Duelfer’s work was important to the Butler Committee because his findings would be the most complete standard against which the committee could measure the prewar assessments. Unfortunately, the work of the Iraq Survey Group, which Duelfer headed, was not completed before the Butler Committee’s deadline. Nevertheless, they were able to obtain preliminary information from Duelfer which allowed them to make some judgments.

The Butler Committee approach was to examine the assessments produced by the Joint Intelligence Committee and then examine the antecedent and
underlying intelligence—both the accepted and the rejected. They would then consider “whether it appears to have been properly evaluated” (BR 3). Another method used in the Butler Report was to compare assessments and data that had been made public through some other process, such as a report by the UN or the IAEA. Once information entered the public domain in some other way, the committee had no concerns about drawing attention to it for the purpose of presenting its findings. This allowed it to make its points without revealing more classified material.

The report, issued on 14 July 2004, consists of 196 pages of text, with nothing blacked out. One of the annexes at the end includes portions of three classified assessments.

The structure of the report is as follows:

I. Introduction
II. Nature and Use of Intelligence
III. Countries of Concern Other than Iraq and Global Trade
IV. Terrorism
V. Counter-Proliferation Machinery
VI. Iraq
VII. Iraq: Specific Issues
VIII. Conclusions on Broader Issues
IX. Summary of Conclusions
X. Annexes

An Optimistic Overview

In the introduction, the report thanks the intelligence agencies for their cooperation and work, and declares that the committee is “relatively confident” that they have been provided all of the relevant data. They also note that the Intelligence Community coordinated its efforts so that the committee received a single stream of papers and data, not a separate one from each agency. This would seem to indicate a high level of bureaucratic trust, cooperation, and ability to work together. Consistent with this, the report attributes success in exposing the Pakistan-based A.Q. Kahn nuclear proliferation network to “strong integration in the U.K. between all agencies,” noting that a decision was made to share even the most sensitive information at the working level. There was also a “high degree of cooperation between agencies and policy-makers in departments” (BR 20). This integration was further enhanced by the creation of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre in June 2003 (BR 36), bringing together staff from eleven different government agencies and departments.

Like the U.S. Senate report, the Butler Report takes some time to describe the intelligence process, laying out four steps: collection, validation, analysis, and assessment. The report explains collection as
made up mainly of signals intelligence (SIGINT), information from human sources (HUMINT), and imagery information (IMINT), with the other three steps described as follows: “Validation should remove information which is unreliable (including reporting which has been deliberately inserted to mislead). Analysis should assemble fragmentary intelligence into coherent meaningful accounts. Assessment should put intelligence into a sensible real-world context and identify how it can affect policy-making” (BR 14).

Validation has as much to do with the faithful transmission of the information through the intelligence collection agency as it does with the quality of the source. In the British system, the Ministry of Defence receives the largest quantity of intelligence, and the analysis stage is carried out there by its Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS). The Butler Report states that “analysis can be conducted only by people expert in the subject matter” (BR 10). So, while validation looks at both the source and the chain of communication, analysis looks at the factual substance of the information, evaluates it, and tries to make sense of it. The report states that “assessment may be conducted separately from analysis or as an almost parallel process in the mind of the analyst” (BR 10). Further, “in the UK, assessment is usually explicitly described as “all-source”’ (BR 11). The goal with assessment is to be as objective as possible, unaffected by motives and pressures that might distort judgment (BR 12). The report notes that in the UK, “central intelligence assessment is the responsibility of the Assessments Staff.” This staff, housed within the Cabinet Office, is made up of approximately thirty senior and middle-ranking officials on assignment from other departments, along with secretarial and administrative support.

The Joint Committee
The Joint Intelligence Committee, which meets weekly, brings together the intelligence agencies, the DIS, and important policy departments. The Chief of the Assessments Staff is also a member of the JIC. In addition to the regular attendees, government departments send officials as matters warrant it. Representatives from the intelligence communities of Australia, Canada, and the United States also attend on occasion. The JIC’s chairman has at times also been the Prime Minister’s Foreign Policy Adviser: “The JIC thus brings together in regular meetings the most senior people responsible for intelligence collection, for intelligence assessment and for the use of intelligence in the main departments for which it is collected” (BR 13).

In addition to conventional and direct national interests, JIC assessments also support inspection, monitoring, and verification regimes in other parts of the world to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and
biological weapons (BR 38). This indicates a vision for intelligence that goes beyond immediate state security interests to longer range interests.

As noted earlier, JIC assessments do not contain minority reports or dissents.

When the intelligence is unclear or otherwise inadequate and the JIC at the end of its debate is still uncertain, it may report alternative interpretations of the facts before it such as they are; but in such cases all the membership agrees that the interpretations they are proposing are viable alternatives. The JIC does not...characterise such alternatives as championed by individual members who disagree with colleagues’ points of view. (BR 13)

The JIC has also made the assertion that when intelligence is ambiguous it should not be artificially simplified. The Butler Report includes extensive quotations from JIC assessments.

The report identifies several examples of JIC assessments where the “JIC made clear that much of the assessment was based on its own judgment” (BR 75). By this the authors seem to mean that the assessment was based, not on new information, but on speculation and logical extrapolation from previously known facts. This type of reporting seems particularly problematic in a context where the providers of intelligence and the consumers of intelligence are working together and are sometimes one and the same. In the absence of hard data, policy preferences are likely to be indistinguishable from assessments. Despite this, the committee found no evidence that senior JIC policy officials improperly influenced assessments in a preferred-policy direction (BR 110).

But concern about politicization resulting from publicity was evidenced. The report notes that the dossier broke new ground in three ways:

- The JIC had never previously produced a public document.
- No government case for any international action had previously been made to the British public through explicitly drawing on a JIC publication.
- The authority of the British Intelligence Community, and of the JIC in particular, had never been used in such a public way (BR 76).

Material from the JIC had been used in public before, but had never been attributed. To the Butler Committee, this constituted a major change with worrisome consequences (BR 114). The concern was that bringing intelligence into the public arena would tempt everyone to use it as a political tool, and eventually as a partisan political tool. Americans would tend to frame this as an issue of transparency and see attribution as a positive step. To them, the greater danger of politicization arises from the strength of the relationship between intelligence producers and policymakers.
The Butler Committee saw a need to slightly modify the position and choice of the JIC chairman. Currently, this person may be outranked by the heads of the intelligence agencies that sit at the JIC. The Butler Committee concluded that the person chosen as chairman should be very senior and in the latter stage of his or her career in the government. In sum, the chairman should be beyond influence and have more clout in both the Intelligence Community and the policy community (BR 144).

The committee also suggested expanding and developing both the JIC Assessments Staff and the HUMINT collection capacity of the various agencies. Insufficient collection in some areas was accompanied by an insufficient capacity to analyze the collected information.

The public dossier was heavily influenced by the 9 September 2003 JIC assessment. According to the Butler Committee, “the most significant difference was the omission of the warnings included in JIC assessments about the limited intelligence base on which some aspects of those assessments were being made” (BR 80).

The committee also suggested that the JIC enhance the ability of assessments to convey levels of confidence, and drew attention to the U.S. practice of doing this explicitly, along with notes of dissent (BR 145).

In a couple of places, the Butler Report mentioned, but only briefly, compartmentalization as a problem (BR 111, 139). This problem was much more prominent in the Senate report on the American system. In fact, the Butler Report and the British dossier seem relatively comfortable discussing secrets that have already been revealed through some other source.

Finally, the Butler Report noted some management weaknesses with human sources in the Secret Intelligence Service (BR 102–109). These were indirectly the result of staff cuts and could easily be fixed by reversing the cuts and reinstituting previous practices. These do not seem to indicate any major differences in British and American approaches.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND UK INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS

First, some differences are obvious. The Butler Report, which is final, consists of twelve pages of front matter and 196 pages of report. The Senate report, two and one-half times longer, with nine pages of front matter and 511 pages of report, is only the first of two phases of investigation and reporting. The British report was produced by a committee of five members: two current members of Parliament (one from the government, the other from the opposition), two former high-ranking civil servants, and one former high-ranking military officer (former chief of the Defence Staff). The committee had a staff of seven, plus additional interview transcribers. The American report was nominally produced by a congressional committee of seventeen members (plus the Senate majority
and minority leaders, who are ex-officio members of SSCI), no doubt with a much larger staff that did a greater share of the actual work. This disparity in size may be attributable to the disparity between the two nations in resources and international responsibilities, but the suspicion is that it at least partly reflects a relative efficiency.

The British focused their investigation on ensuring validity from the beginning of the evidence chain to the JIC. Since the JIC represents both the producers of intelligence and the consumers of final assessments, it is not as subject to some of the assessment problems that occur in the American system. For instance, the Senate report describes the problem of layering (SEN 22-23, 212) which happens when new assessments are based upon old assessments that are based upon even older assessments. The key danger with this practice is that the caveats and uncertainties of the earlier assessments may be left out in later ones that tend to treat the earlier ones as sources, thereby causing the reader of the current assessment to think that it rests on a stronger foundation than it does. Previous estimates become conventional wisdom rather than true estimates with particular levels of confidence. Upon receiving the new estimate, the policymaker may be not aware of its true contingency. Although still possible, this problem is less likely to occur in a system where those incorporating the intelligence into a final policy advice are included in the assessment process. They are more likely to know the history and the genesis of the assessments to which they are contributing and agreeing.

Questioning Assumptions

Closely related to the layering problem is that of failing to properly identify assumptions. Both the American and British reports are concerned with the possibility that certain worst-case calculations might be mistaken for the prevailing wisdom of what is most likely to develop (BR 46).

Countering the possible benefit the British derive from the JIC system is the danger of politicization of intelligence that most American observers would anticipate from a close proximity of analysis/assessment and policymaking.25 The concern is that known policy preferences will cause analysis to be skewed in favor of supporting those preferences. As the American scholar/practitioner Mark Lowenthal has succinctly put it, “Only by maintaining their [analysts’] distance from policy can they hope to produce intelligence that is objective.”26 The CIA has an Ombudsman for Politicization to deal specifically with the problem of pressure from management or policymakers, and the Senate report includes a chapter on the issue of improper political pressure (SEN 357–365). The Butler Report is not greatly concerned with the relatively close working relationship of intelligence producers and intelligence consumers in the JIC. It notes that “the JIC has always been very conscious” of the need to be objective (BR 16).
Surprisingly, the Senate report does not include a list of recommended changes. This may have fallen outside their self-determined mandate for political reasons. The Republicans in control of the committee may have wanted to leave the President’s hands free, or they simply may not have reached a bipartisan agreement on what changes to recommend. Another explanation is that the committee members did not believe large changes were politically feasible, given the history of the U.S. Intelligence Community and the great number of individuals and institutions that have a stake in the current arrangements. For instance, all of the various congressional committees and subcommittees that have some control over the Intelligence Community would likely resist restructuring efforts that would lessen their control. Other departments of government (for example, the military services and the Justice Department) would also fight changes that might reduce their share of intelligence activities and information sources. Given its public failures, and the legislation to reorganize the Intelligence Community that was passed after these reports were written, it is unlikely that the committee felt that no structural changes were needed.

The Butler Committee did provide explicit recommendations in its report, perhaps due to the fact that its mandate came from the executive in a parliamentary system where the executive is, of course, also the legislative leader. In such a system, the interest and ability in making changes is much more likely to be consistent.

Both the Senate report and the Butler Report identify information-sharing within their respective governments and intelligence communities as a problem, but in the British system it is a rather minor anomaly, whereas in the United States it is systemic and normal to refrain from sharing information with other agencies and departments. This is also seen directly in the investigative work of the committees. In the United Kingdom, the investigators eventually had access to all of the information that they requested. In fact, the intelligence agencies were able to work together to provide requested information through one source, regardless of its origin. In the United States, the investigators had to negotiate with each agency and the White House. Despite the fact that during the Senate investigation the Senate and SSCI were controlled by the President’s political party, they were not granted access to everything that they wanted, most notably the President’s Daily Briefs. But the presidentially appointed Silberman-Robb Commission was granted full access to these documents, thus supporting the idea that institutional rivalry between the executive and legislative branches in the U.S. system accounts for some differences between intelligence information availability and use in the American and British systems. Notably, the American NIE and the first major post-invasion investigation of intelligence were both initiated by American legislators, not by the executive branch. At the least, American intelligence agencies
exist in a more complex setting of political institutions than their British counterparts.

Another difference between the two approaches is that the United States suffers from a lack of alternate perspectives. Although the U.S. Intelligence Community has especially strong relationships and interactions—liaison—with intelligence agencies in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, no officials from these countries were interviewed or participated in the investigation leading to the Senate report, even though they are surely involved with, and pay close attention to, what happens with U.S. intelligence. Indeed, the Senate report views reliance on intelligence collection by foreign governments as a potential source of manipulation. The Butler Committee did not limit its interviews to British government employees or British nationals, but interviewed individuals from a variety of nations, including U.S. government officials.

LIMITATIONS

Before drawing final conclusions, the limitations of this study should be spelled out. First, despite the unusual amount of material released, gaps in the documentary evidence still exist. On the British side, although portions of the actual assessments produced by the government have been made public (BR Annex B, 163-176), what percentage of the full assessments these represent is unknown. Also, the Butler Commission delivered some additional, classified findings to the government that are not included in their public report. On the American side, most of the text of NIE 2002-16HC is still classified, with masked-out lines scattered throughout the Senate report. Material that is not available to be read cannot be evaluated. If the unavailable material is selected in some manner that is systematically related to the nation of origin, then the conclusions of the current analysis are biased. Further, even if the still-classified material does not skew the analysis, it may include some additional national differences that will not be detected. Nevertheless, a great deal of what is still classified might not change the current analysis. For instance, the revelation of protected sources might reveal something about divergent methods, but is more likely to produce only a list of names.

Second, this study looks at only one set of documents for a single time and a single situation that is exceptional in a number of ways. Therefore, the question arises as to whether the evidence reviewed here represents British and American approaches generally. This is a problem of validity: Does this data really represent the phenomenon of interest? The data here does provide evidence for the conclusions drawn, but it is not conclusive evidence. Adding more cases of corresponding British and American documentation would strengthen the conclusions.
Third, there is the question of whether the two investigations and reports are strictly comparable. The American investigation was carried out by the large staff of a legislative committee; the British investigation by a much smaller committee dominated by civil servants. Had the Silberman-Robb Committee been formed earlier and finished its work in the summer of 2004, then it would have more directly corresponded to the Butler Committee. But the Silberman-Robb Committee study was influenced by both the Senate report and the Butler Report, and therefore does not represent a first-hand or even an exclusively American look at the situation.

This assessment has attempted to avoid preconceptions and instead let the documents speak for themselves. Of course, setting aside all preconceptions is impossible. The documents examined here are consistent with some commonly understood differences between American and British intelligence structures, procedures, and attitudes, but they also highlight a few unexamined differences.

**THE VALUE OF COMPARISON**

Among the numerous important differences between American and British approaches to intelligence, one of the most interesting is the relative ease with which information is shared within the British government. The Butler Committee noted only minor problems along these lines, whereas compartmentalization and information hoarding are major problems in the American system. Without this liberality, the assessments-producing Joint Intelligence Council would not be possible. The JIC itself is another important distinguishing structure. In it, the whole British government (and sometimes even representatives of foreign governments) is brought together to make assessments, not just the intelligence-producing agencies. This contributes to another distinguishing feature of British intelligence practice, namely, providing greater context for understanding problematic situations. UK reports provide more of what anthropologist Clifford Geertz called “thick description,” or the detail necessary to understand the meanings and motives of behaviors. This detail might be historical or cultural, or even detail about individuals other than the immediate target of interest—detail that reveals not just functional interactions but also the identities and relationships that shape them.

Another important difference, made more salient through the documents studied here, is the way in which intelligence information is transmitted to the political executive. During the period when these documents were produced, the formal process in the United States was for the Director of Central Intelligence to present to the President intelligence produced by the Intelligence Community. This created a bias toward the CIA’s views over these of other IC agencies, and a competition for the President’s ear as
other agencies tried to find pathways that bypassed the DCI. In the United Kingdom, the JIC system and the generally cooperative attitudes that prevail seem to avoid this problem. All the UK intelligence services are represented on the JIC, which meets weekly, and information presented there is taken back to their departments and their political overseers by the various department heads. The Prime Minister also gets his information from the JIC. Individual intelligence services, therefore, have the same opportunity to communicate their efforts to the whole government and do not need to compete with one another for access to the government leadership.

Further, Britain’s JIC system forces the leaders of different parts of the Intelligence Community to sit down together on a weekly basis and reconcile their views. This more frequent personal interaction undoubtedly contributes to their willingness to share information with one another. The U.S. National Foreign Intelligence Board structure is similarly collegial on paper, but does not frequently convene in person, and serves mainly as a routing list for reports or conference calls. It also lacks the regular interaction with top policy advisors and nonintelligence department heads as a group.

A final major difference comes from the distributed nature of political power in the American system. Because of the separation of the legislative and executive branches of government, intelligence agencies in the United States face a more complicated environment and a different set of pressures than their counterparts in the United Kingdom. As noted, the legislative branch in the American system initiated both the NIE and the post-invasion investigation; the latter despite the lack of partisan division between Congress and the President at the time. In this environment, intelligence agencies can be subjected to conflicting pressures and can also choose to appeal to either of two (or more) masters. In the British parliamentary system, intelligence producers are far less likely to experience these conflicting pressures because the legislative leadership automatically holds the executive power, too.

While there is a parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee in the United Kingdom, its role is limited and it has not effectively balanced against the government the way that the congressional committees exert a balance against the executive branch in the U.S. system.²⁸ This is evident in the fact of the ISC’s restricted access to government documents, its small role in the Butler Report, and its inability to report to Parliament or the public without the Prime Minister’s approval. For the same reasons, the access of opposition or minority political parties to intelligence information and influence is also much less in the British system. One implication of this system is that there is no institutional counterweight to check the executive use or misuse of the UK’s intelligence services other than the judiciary,
which is not likely to get involved unless there is a domestic abuse of power or some other incident that inflames the public.

Besides these major differences are some others, less sweeping, but still important. Most significant are the American practices of including notes of dissent and communicating explicit levels of confidence in intelligence estimates. Among other things, the Butler Report recommended that the British JIC assessments staff consider adopting these U.S. practices.

Improving Comparisons

This study is a basic, observational contribution to the academic discipline of Intelligence Studies that can be built upon in several ways:

(1) documents from additional nations related to the Iraq WMD problem should be examined;
(2) comparable documentation describing other problems (not the Iraq case) should be sought out and examined. Both steps would expand the number of cases available and may result in a typology of intelligence systems;
(3) theoretical explanations for the differences or types thereby found should be explored and tested. For example, why do the British provide more context in their reports? Why can the British departments share information and the Americans cannot? Some researchers are already engaged in efforts to explain the perceived difference in intelligence–policymaker distance using cultural variables. Additional explanatory power might be found in the broader institutional environment or in the historical choices of previous governments. Both the rational choice approach and the less-individualistic historical institutionalism approach to explaining norms and patterns of behavior would likely be illuminating.
(4) the implications of different intelligence systems can be explored, assessing their advantages and disadvantages and thus providing useful information for governments and policymakers.

With these steps, further comparative analysis can be applied in the field of Intelligence Studies to reveal important aspects of intelligence systems that go undetected in the more common, single-country studies.

REFERENCES


8 Ibid., p. 46.


10 This discussion of the U.S. Intelligence Community and its products is based on the system in place at the time the Iraq documents were produced. Some features of this system changed with the passage of the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* (17 December 2004). In particular, the creation of the position of Director of National Intelligence (DNI) changed the structure and some of the top-level interactions of the Intelligence Community. This will be discussed further below.

11 Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, pp. 102–103. Now, however, the Director of National Intelligence has replaced the DCI in this role.


Because none of the pages in *Key Judgments* displays page numbers, references to pages in this document will follow an ordinal sequence beginning with the first page as page one.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), however, did not dissent on the issue of whether Iraq had begun to reconstitute its nuclear weapons program.


“Outside” in this context appears to mean outside of the group of analysts who prepared it in the first place, not outside of the Intelligence Community.


The report also alludes to requirement-setting for collection, but does not treat this formally and perhaps does not consider itself to be evaluating this part of the process.


28 The ISC consists of nine members appointed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the leaders of the two main opposition parties. Its members come from both Houses of Parliament and are not limited to the governing party. The committee is within the “ring of secrecy” of the Official Secrets Act and reports directly to the Prime Minister.
